

Home Star, an energy efficiency jobs initiative proposed by Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.), advanced out of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment Wednesday.

Based on Welch's Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance (REEP) program, Home Star is a national retrofit initiative that will provide incentives to homeowners seeking to make their houses more energy efficient. Home Star is expected to create more than 160,000 jobs, retrofit three million houses and save American families \$10 billion over ten years.

In his opening remarks, Welch reached across the aisle, addressing Republican suggestions about Home Star and highlighting remarks made by former Michigan governor John Engler – a Republican who supports the program – at a committee hearing last week.

"Every state and every congressional district in this country is suffering from staggering unemployment rates in building, construction, manufacturing and retail. Every family in this country is spending too much on energy bills," Welch said. "By investing in efficiency and supporting Home Star, Democrats and Republicans alike can come together to create jobs, save families money and reduce harmful carbon emissions."

Home Star provides two ways for homeowners to invest in their houses and save money. The first – Silver Star – is a point-of-sale rebate for up to 50 percent of the cost of certain energy efficiency improvements up to \$3,000 per home – including insulation, duct sealing and water heaters. The second – Gold Star – rewards homeowners for the total amount of energy saved: \$3,000 for a demonstrated 20 percent energy savings, and another \$1,000 for each additional five percent saved, up to half the cost of the project.

Welch is the author of the Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance (REEP) program, upon which Home Star is based. REEP is a national energy efficiency retrofit initiative that provides incentives to homeowners and businesses to perform efficiency upgrades. REEP, which Welch originally introduced in March 2009 as a standalone bill (H.R. 1778) was passed by the House last summer as part of the Waxman-Markey energy bill (H.R. 2454).

Welch has worked closely with administration officials and congressional leaders in the months since to adapt REEP to take effect immediately and create even more jobs in the construction sector, which has an unemployment rate of 25 percent. President Obama singled out Welch's work on Home Star as he announced his support for the program at a Virginia Home Depot

store in December.

[Click here](#) to watch Welch's opening remarks at today's hearing.